

was voted into the National Honor Society. All of her hard work paid off and she was offered a full scholarship to Bennett College. After graduating Bennett, she enrolled and graduated from City College of New York. There she maintained her scholastic achievements earning her a place on the Dean's List. Wilma became a registered nurse in 1973 and later went to work for New York Methodist Hospital where she has been employed for 34 years.

Wilma is an active member of New Canaan Baptist Church where she serves as the superintendent of vacation bible school and a Sunday school teacher. She is also a member of the C.E. Lewis Gospel Chorus, Floral Club and the Senior Usher Board. She also serves as president of the Red Circle Ministry, the building fund, and the renovation committee. Wilma has also been named an honorary member of the First Ladies Club and Gospel Chorus.

Wilma is the faithful and loving wife to the late Robert Best. Their union was blessed with one son, Robert, Jr. She is the grandmother of two: Antoine and Christian Best; and is also a great grandmother of three: Tionnah, Tion, and Tishaun Best.

Wilma loves gardening, arts and crafts, listening to music, and attending nursing seminars. She has received a Betty Crocker Award for her baking skills.

Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the achievements of Wilma Best and her work in caring for others.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Wilma Best who demonstrates a level of altruistic dedication that makes her most worthy of our recognition today.

HONORING THE SMITHTOWN LIBRARY

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 10, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a respected and important landmark in the First Congressional District, the Smithtown Library.

Since 1907, the Smithtown Library has been a dynamic center for continuous learning, with a multitude of resources and programs for the Long Island community. The library ranks as the seventh largest system in the State of New York. Its main building and three branch libraries serve over 115,000 residents in the town of Smithtown.

The Smithtown Library was first housed in the former chambers of Judge John Lawrence Smith, which still stands today east of the present main library building on Middle Country Road. In May 1952, the library was granted an absolute charter by the State of New York and became a town library under the direction of the town of Smithtown.

The library is home to "The Long Island History Collection and the Richard H. Handley Collection of Long Island Americana," a unique collection of priceless artifacts dating back to the 1600s that includes nearly 8,000 books, over 750 maps and 130 boxes of written documents. No other institution on Long Island has a collection this large available for public viewing and scholarly research.

In November 2001, Smithtown residents voted that the library become independent and

the name was changed to the "Smithtown Special Library District," but it is still affectionately known as the Smithtown Library by the community. On Friday, November 30, the library celebrated its 100th anniversary with a gala centennial celebration.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to quote John Quincy Adams, this great country's sixth President, who said, "To furnish the means of acquiring knowledge is the greatest benefit that can be conferred upon mankind." Indeed, the Smithtown Library is a welcoming place for knowledge, dedicated to excellence and to enhancing the quality of life in Suffolk County, New York. I am proud to honor its 100th anniversary.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO ALL OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE (ITS) ON GRANTING OPEN ACCESS TO VAST HOLOCAUST AND OTHER WORLD WAR II RELATED ARCHIVES LOCATED IN BAD AROLSEN, GERMANY

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 10, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today with my good friends and original cosponsors of this important resolution, Representatives ROBERT WEXLER, chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and MARK KIRK to introduce a resolution expressing gratitude to all of the member states of the International Commission of the International Tracing Service (ITS) on ratifying the May 2006 Agreement to grant open access to vast Holocaust and other World War II-related archives located in Bad Arolsen, Germany.

I am thankful for their bipartisan leadership, not only on this issue to open the Bad Arolsen archives, but on wider issues of anti-Semitism in general.

This legislation is the culmination of long-standing efforts I have made with Representatives WEXLER, ROS-LEHTINEN, KIRK, and others to release these crucial Holocaust records.

Madam Speaker, November 28, 2007, was a historic moment in time when for the first time in 62 years, Holocaust survivors, their descendants, researchers, and the public were allowed open access to the International Tracing Service (ITS) archives in Bad Arolsen, Germany, the largest closed Holocaust-era archives in the world.

These significant archives contain 50 million records on the fates of some 17.5 million individual victims of Nazi brutality. Everything from lists of the names of Holocaust concentration camp victims murdered on Hitler's birthday to death camp prisoners' personal affect cards are included in these records, and each holds an important place in the memory of a victim.

Until earlier this year, when Holocaust survivors requested information from the ITS, they were shamefully often provided with letters written entirely in German with incomplete or misinformation about the horrors they had

experienced. Often survivors passed away prior to ever being provided the truth about their experiences under Nazi persecution. Until only 2 weeks ago, these historic materials were held secret from researchers and research institutions and the general public.

In today's world, filled with growing international intolerance including anti-Semitism, hate, racial bigotry, xenophobia, and religious discrimination, it could not be more urgent and critical to allow for unfettered access to these archives.

The ultimate release of these documents serves to further delegitimize international leaders who insist on spewing Holocaust denial and other anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Allowing for open access to these historical records also contributes to the world's collective memory of the Holocaust atrocities and ensures that these historic documents will be preserved and shared with future generations when survivors are no longer among us.

I am thankful for the efforts made by the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the State Department, survivor groups, and this body of Congress to pressure the member states of the International Tracing Service to ratify the 1955 Bonn Accords and throw open the doors of these archives.

The new leadership of the International Committee of the Red Cross at the ITS should also be commended for their efforts to provide more expeditious and comprehensive responses to survivors and their descendants. A year ago, the ITS faced a 140,000 backlog of survivor and others' inquiries. Today, the ITS has reduced the requests to less than half of that amount and is committed to processing incoming requests within 8 weeks.

Our collaborative bipartisan efforts have truly paid off. I am most appreciative that the remaining European ITS member states ultimately recognized the justifiable and moral importance of combating modern day anti-Semitism with the release of these archives.

This resolution serves to commend all parties who assisted in opening the archives and increasing their accessibility to all. Finally, remaining survivors and researchers alike will be able to view these tremendously important documents and hopefully find closure on one of the darkest moments in history. Our efforts send a robust message to the world that the atrocities and murders of the Holocaust victims shall forever remain at the forefront of our collective and individual memories.

May we never forget the horrors of the Holocaust and view this historic moment as a constant reminder of what happens when humanity is silenced and evil permitted to wage war on the innocent.

I ask for my colleagues' support and urge the swift passage of this resolution.

A TRIBUTE TO ALBERT J. SIMMONS, JR.

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 10, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Albert J. Simmons, Jr., and the hard work that he has dedicated to the better development of New York City youth.

Born in Savannah, GA, and reared in New York City, Mr. Simmons is a graduate of